

Community Development Connection

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Community Development Department -
Town of Amherst



Safe Routes to School Travel Plan Completed

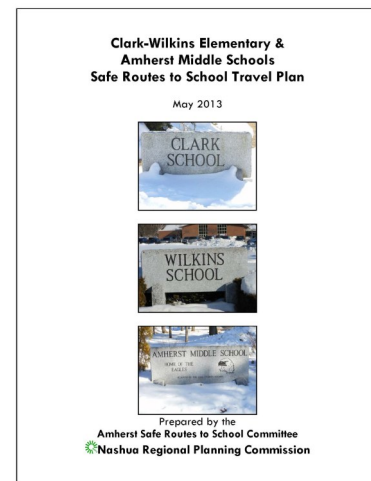
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The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) has completed the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Travel Plan for the Clark-Wilkins Elementary and Amherst Middle School. The Travel Plan was developed in partnership with the Town of Amherst, SAU 39, and NH DOT and dedicated volunteers through the Amherst Safe Routes to School Committee. The purpose of the plan is to develop a strategy for encouraging a greater number of students to walk and bicycle to and from school. The plan includes a prioritized list of recommendations including infrastructure improvements near the schools, education and encouragement efforts, and traffic calming measures.

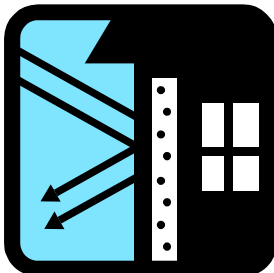
This fall the next round of SRTS grant funding will become available. As the Town of Amherst has completed this plan, the Town will now be eligible to apply for up to \$250,000 towards completing recommended infrastructure projects. The SRTS is a 100% reimbursement program for municipalities.

The Amherst Safe Routes to School Committee will be working with the Town later this summer to develop an application for the upcoming round of SRTS funding. For more information on this project or to view the plan please check out [DPW's Road Improvements](#) webpage.



Did You Know— ICC Energy Codes?

The International Energy Conservation Code has been in effect in New Hampshire since April 2010. This code contains requirements for insulation values in both commercial and residential structures. While most people are aware that meeting these codes is a requirement, most do not consider that the requirements outlined in the Energy Code are minimum standards. Indeed, all building codes are minimum standards based on the best building science technology available at the time the code is adopted.



Another way to look at codes is as a starting point upon which to build, not necessarily the ultimate end goal. This is especially true when it comes to insulation values. New technologies developed since the Energy Code was adopted allow you to install higher R-values within standard wall, floor, and ceiling spaces. Increasing those R-values for a building project beyond current code requirements can make sense on many levels. It could make economic sense, especially if the project contains a large amount of conditioned (heated) space. After all, no one wants to pay more to heat their homes than absolutely needed. Also, potential future buyers may look more favorably on a home with better energy efficiency. There is also the personal satisfaction of knowing that you have taken a step towards energy conservation, reduction of CO2 emissions, and protecting the environment and the future of our planet. And that's good for everybody.

Public Hearings

July 10th – 7:30pm – Planning Board Public Hearing

To update [Article XI](#) of the Non-Residential Site Plan Regulations (NRSP) with the newly adopted changes to the Personal Wireless Service Facilities Ordinance.

July 18th – 7:00pm – Historic District Commission Public Hearing

To [add criteria](#) defining when a waiver can be granted by the HDC.

Water Resources Public Input Session—Kick-off Meeting

The Planning Board and the Community Development Office hosted a Public Input session on Wednesday June 19th at the Souhegan High School Information Center to kick-off the Round II Community Planning Grant. The grant was awarded to the community to combine and update the water resource ordinances with current Best Management Practices for the Watershed Conservation, Wetlands Protection, and Aquifer Conservation Districts in order to protect the high quality drinking water and watershed of the Town of Amherst and the Region. The purpose of the kick-off meeting was to hear from you – the residents and businesses of Amherst – your ideas and concerns as related to water resources and the associated ordinances.

Thank you to all of you who took time out to come to the meeting, call, stop-by, or email with your ideas and concerns. The Town sent 4200 postcards to property owners, utilized the message board at the transfer station and generated articles in both the Amherst Citizen and the Patch to try and get the word out. The meeting was a success with over thirty people in attendance and some great conversations and ideas generated. The minutes of the session will be on the [Special Projects](#) page under the Round II Grant and the video of the meeting can be viewed on Channel 20 or the [ACTV website](#).

Share your ideas!

Help the Town protect Amherst's high quality water resources by sharing your thoughts on what's working and how we can improve. Your ideas are the starting point to combine, simplify and update the Wetland, Watershed and Aquifer Ordinances.

WHEN: June 19th, 2013 @ 7:00 pm
WHERE: Souhegan High School, Rm 202 Info Center

For more information check out the *Community Planning Grant* at www.amherstnh.gov/special-projects/ or contact Sarah Marchant, Community Development Director at 603.673.6041 or smarchant@amherstnh.gov

Light refreshments will be provided!

New Hampshire Housing
Empowering Your Home

NEW HAMPSHIRE
CITIZEN PLANNER

In addition to crucial public input and assistance begun with the June 19th meeting, the Planning Board is working with consultants and an Advisory Team including the Amherst Conservation Commission, Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce, Pennichuck Waterworks, and the Towns of Merrimack and Milford, along with many other stakeholder groups to help ensure the ordinance revisions will work with the breadth of the community's needs.

The goal of this project will be to prepare revised ordinances that reflect the goals of the Master Plan and the interests of the community for the voters to approve on the 2014 Town Ballot.

There will be additional meetings as revisions on the ordinances get underway over the summer and fall, with your feedback. The final ordinances will need to be ready for public hearings in December. Keep your eyes out for information on this project. If you would like to become more involved, please contact Sarah Marchant, Community Development Director, at smarchant@amherstnh.gov or 673-6041 to see how you can help.

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) Update

The [Capital Improvements Plan \(CIP\) Committee](#) started the 2014-2019 CIP process with their first meeting on June 12th. As a quick refresher, the CIP is a program authorized by State law to link local infrastructure investments with master plan goals, land use ordinances, and economic development.

The Department Heads and School Districts have submitted over 50 project requests to be reviewed and placed in the CIP this year by the volunteer CIP Committee. Projects Requests are submitted to the Committee for projects that will have a useful life of at least five years and are valued at a minimum of \$75,000. Department Heads are also allowed to submit lesser projects if they determine a need. The goal is to have a final document drafted in September/October to be approved by the Planning Board. The document can then become a tool for the School Board and the Board of Selectmen to utilize as part of the budgeting process.

Meeting Results:



Each month this column will bring you a quick update on the results of the Zoning Board, Planning Board, and Historic District Commission's deliberations:

Zoning Board (ZBA)

The ZBA heard one Requests for Rehearing on June 18th:

1. Case #4135: Rehearing of Variance Case#3826

Stacy J. Clark, PIN# 001-013-000, 131 Hollis Road (Rte. 122) requested and was denied a variance to use the existing two-story building as business offices with a portion of the building being used for residential purposes for an indefinite period of time in the Residential/Rural Zone.

The variance request was denied.

Planning Board (PB)

The PB heard two applications at the regular meeting.

- PZ3931 – Jason Ekstrom – Ekstrom Lawn Care, LLC – 4 Tech Circle – PIN #002-020-004:** Layout for landscaping company headquarters.

The application was approved as submitted .

- PZJohn Woods – Old Mail Rd, PIN# 008-051-002:** (untable) re-submission of a conditional approved, expired Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) to address prior wetlands impacts on a vacant lot.

The application was tabled to September to allow the applicant time to hire a licensed professional to confirm the work required by the WRMP has been completed.

Historic District Commission (HDC)

The HDC had a site walk on Saturday, June 15th for Case #4042 at 98 Amherst Street, Case#4112 at 169 Amherst St, Case#4121 at 4 Middle Street and Case #4124 at 40 Courthouse Road. The meeting on June 20th included four regular applications.

- Case #4042 – 98 Amherst Street, PIN # 005-044-000 – Lynda Tracey –** for small fence to stop erosion and provide backdrop for flowers and shrubs.

Findings: The fence has been there, and the vinyl has weathered; Larger shrubs would be good; The HDC previously went to the property for a porch application and missed the fence at that time; The fence is in keeping with the house; This is a non-contributing property and on the edge of the extended Historic District; The fence has been there since 2009; This is an illegal fence and will remain on probation in the event that the fence needs to be replaced, it should be replaced with a conforming fence.

The HDC unanimously voted to allow the fence to remain since it has been there since 2009 with the stipulation that if the fence needs to be repaired, replaced, or modified, that it be replaced with a conforming fence. Further, the applicant is to plant something taller in front of the fence so that other people in town won't be upset with it.

(Continued on pg. 4)

Meeting Results (continued)

2. **Case #4112 – 169 Amherst Street, PIN #006-115-009 – Shawn & Beth Bawell** – addition to enlarge kitchen, create dining space, a mudroom entry, laundry, and half-bath.

Findings: This is a non-contributing property; The house was built in 1976; The proposed work is not visible from the road; The property is at the edge of the Historic District; The materials will be consistent with the historic district; The windows will be consistent with those approved earlier in an application in 2009; The scale of the addition is suitable to the existing house.

The HDC unanimously voted to approve the application as it stands.

3. **Case #4121 – 4 Middle Street, PIN #017-063-000 – Frank & Nancy Brown** – to remove dead tree and replace with Dogwood.

Findings: The tree is in distress.; The roots are compromised; Paving the driveway did not help; If it came down, it would do damage to the house

The Commission unanimously approved the removal of the tree and felt that putting a dogwood in its place would be appropriate.

4. **Case #4124 – 40 Courthouse Road, PIN #016-024-000 – Scott & Susan Adams** – to screen in and cover a chicken coop.

Findings: This is a contributing property and part of the original farm house; It is a highly visible and very historic property; The barn was 200 years old when it was moved from across the street to its present location.

Upon a motion duly made/seconded (DC/TG), the HDC unanimously voted to approve the application as presented.

Thank You Richard Kimball & Jim Emmond for your service on the Historic District Commission!

Richard and Jim recently stepped down after many years volunteering on the Historic District Commission. We would like to thank you both for your years of service to the Town. The commission would not exist without dedicated members like you. We wish you the best in the future and hope you have some fun on your free Thursday nights!

Revolving Loan Fund Opportunity!

The City of Nashua Economic Development team recently toured Amherst's Commercial/Industrial districts with May Balsama, Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, and Sarah Marchant, Community Development Director. The team was impressed with Amherst and all it has to offer. In addition, the City has a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that is open to Amherst business. The RLF is intended for permanent working capital and fixed asset financing for start-up and existing businesses in the Nashua area. To be eligible the business must be able to:

- Meet the SBA definition of a "small business"
- Be able to produce no less than one new job for each \$20,000 of RLF investment; and
- Demonstrate the capacity to repay debt and produce jobs.

This low interest loan fund can be used for owner occupied commercial real estate acquisition, acquisition of machinery and equipment and permanent working capital. For further information on this great opportunity contact Thomas Galligan, Economic Development Director at (603) 589-3260 or galliganit@nashuanh.gov.

Board of Selectmen Strategic Planning Initiatives

The Board of Selectmen, have launched two important new initiatives we believe will advance the breadth, quality and/or efficiency of town services provided to Amherst Citizens.

Helping Amherst Town Government Build Engagement with Citizens: A Strategic Communications Initiative



Launched in May 2013, this multi-year initiative aims to increase the quality and timeliness of two-way communications among town government officials and Amherst citizens. It has three goals:

- Keep citizens apprised of town activities, deliberations, and decision-making.
- Implement more ways for citizens to share their views with selectmen more often.
- Identify and launch more ways for citizens to conduct town business online.

This initiative targets improvements to all forms of town communications: interpersonal, print publications, social media, public media, and especially the town website.

Creating a Desired Future: An Integrated Approach to Strategic Thinking and Planning launched in June 2013, this multi-year initiative aims to:

- Strengthen the quality and relevance of strategic thinking and planning across town departments and administration;
- Ensure that annual operating plans are responsive to town needs, prioritized, communicated effectively, and well understood by Amherst citizens;
- Tie proposed departmental budgets to strategic and operational plans with rational explanations of what resources departments expect to expend and why.
- Distribute, as appropriate, the authority, responsibility, and accountability across all levels of town government; and
- Ensure that the regular performance evaluation of all town departments and employees link their activities to the effective and efficient achievement of town goals endorsed by the electorate.

This initiative launches a strategic departmental planning and budgeting process for FY15 and beyond (even though a town-wide strategic plan does not yet exist). Department heads will collaborate with their personnel to develop a range of multi-year plans and budgets (showing alternative tradeoffs in outcomes and expenditures) to address all major needs they identify in their area of responsibility as relevant to the town.

The Board of Selectmen, concurrently, will identify a number of strategic filters, e.g., infrastructure, public safety, quality of life, economic development, etc., and set priorities regarding which of these areas should, in their view, receive priority for the coming year(s) based on past investments and current/projected town needs.

Together, these efforts will enable town government to communicate a rationale along with related plans and budgets to the electorate for their consideration and vote. The selectmen will share this information well before the deliberative session to help ensure that the greatest number of voters will have a broad context and detailed information to support their decision-making. For more information check the [Board of Selectmen's Initiatives webpage](#).



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WE ARE ON THE WEB!

WWW.AMHERSTNH.GOV

The Community Development Office strives to effectively manage community change in accordance with the Master Plan and the Town's ordinances and regulations, by providing professional advice and technical expertise in a consistent and fair manner to citizens, boards and commissions, departments, and regional agencies on the implementation of land use ordinances, regulations, and policies for both the short and long term physical, natural, and economic development of the Town.

The Community Development Office is comprised of the Building, Zoning, Planning, Code Enforcement, and Economic Development Departments. The Office provides support to the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Amherst Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Heritage Commission, and the CIP Committee. The office provides a one-stop location for all land development processing in the Town.



NRPC UPDATE



Exit 36S Planning (Route 3)



The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) in conjunction with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG)

has received federal funding through the Transportation, Community and Systems Preservation Program (TCSP) to conduct a study assessing the effectiveness of a south bound off-ramp at exit 36 on the F.E. Everett Turnpike, near the New Hampshire and Massachusetts border. The study will evaluate traffic flows and potential economic benefits to businesses in the area and will ultimately complete planning analyses in support of the develop-

ment of a southbound off ramp on US Route 3 at Exit 36 in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts.

Frequently Asked Questions:

The Exit 36 Project should consider the development of a multi-modal/rail station in the vicinity of the Pheasant Lane Mall.

There has been significant interest in the relationship between Exit 36S Planning Study and the return of passenger rail to South Nashua. The most common question is will the Exit 36S project make a recommendation to locate a passenger rail station at or near the Pheasant Lane Mall? The answer to that question is no. The Exit 36S Study is not scoped to analyze the engineering and operational components needed to determine the

most effective location for a passenger rail station.

What the Exit 36 Project will do related to passenger rail:

- Estimate potential traffic generation and parking demand for an intermodal facility located at or near the Pheasant Lane Mall based on updates to past studies facilitated by the NRPC, NMCOG, and the CTPS.
- Analyze traffic operations of Exit 36S and surrounding intersections assuming an intermodal facility is located at or near the Pheasant Lane Mall.
- Identify opportunities to coordinate potential passenger rail service with intercity bus service and local and regional transit service. [Read more...](#)